

## Personal Property Excess Cost Evaluation and Rebuttal Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

We've attempted to identify frequently asked questions and provide appropriate responses regarding personal property excess cost and rebuttals. The questions and responses are categorized to ease your search for your particular area of concern. If we've failed to answer your question please send a request to: [ecaafa@jppsosat.randolph.af.mil](mailto:ecaafa@jppsosat.randolph.af.mil)

### A: GENERAL EXCESS COST QUESTIONS

**Question:** I've just received notification of indebtedness from shipment of personal property. What avenue do I have to appeal the debt?

**Response:** There are appeal processes available to you. If you receive a DD Form 139 (Pay Adjustment Authorization), check with the Traffic Management Flight BEFORE you agree to pay the debt. You have four (4) avenues for appeal:

- Rebuttal: Your first avenue is filing a rebuttal to ECAF through the Traffic Management Flight. If you wish to dispute the debt, you must state the reasons why the debt is not valid and provide supporting documentation if available.
- Remission: You may file a remission of indebtedness through the Financial Services Office if you are financially unable to pay the debt. (Active Duty Members Only)
- Board for Correction of Military Records: If you believe an error or injustice exists, your next step is a review by the Board for Correction of Military Records (BCMR). You can process your application (DD Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Records) through the Military Personnel Flight. Responses to your rebuttal and remission must accompany your application.
- DoD, Office of Hearings and Appeals (for Service Members) and General Service Administration Board of Contract Appeals (for Civilian Employees): Requests should be processed through the local Finance Services Office (FSO).

**Question:** Why has it taken up to a year since delivery of my personal property to be notified of excess cost?

**Response:** Identification of potential excess cost cases normally occurs six to eight months from the date the shipment was delivered. Cases are identified via computer by Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), Indianapolis, Indiana after the carrier has submitted their bill for payment and payment is processed. While the time lapse is regrettable, the system relies on the expediency of the carrier to submit payment vouchers and an identification and update process by accounting offices. Our goal, is to reduce this time frame as we endeavor to enhance computer programs and capabilities.

**Question:** I've received an excess cost bill for shipment of my personal property for my last move. The carrier personnel that packed and picked up my goods said I had nothing to worry

about on the weight. Now I get a bill, why do I have to pay?

**Response:** Estimates of weight obtained prior to the shipment of your household goods are NOT binding. The actual weight is often higher than estimated.

**Question:** I have a severe hardship and cannot possibly pay this excess cost bill. Can ECAF provide an exception to my weight allowance or waive repayment of the excess costs?

**Response:** Your entitlement is established by the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR) which directly implement federal law and, as such, have the same force and effect. Consequently, our office has no authority to grant an exception or a waiver of the excess cost.

## **B: PERSONAL PROPERTY SHIPMENT QUESTIONS**

**Question:** How can I avoid excess cost of household goods shipment on my next PCS?

**Response:** Although not all inclusive, here are some helpful hints:

- Dispose of unwanted items prior to the packers arrival.
- If possible, arrange to witness the weighing/reweighing of your shipment as a representative of the government.
- Minimize storage in transit.
- Weight Restricted Areas: If you are moving to, from, or between weight restricted areas, make sure that any additional weight allowance that may be authorized is requested, approved, and annotated on your PCS orders.
- Excessive Packing: If you feel that excessive packing has been used in your shipment, discuss your concern with the destination transportation office prior to delivery. The transportation office can request the carrier separately weigh the packing materials used. This can only be accomplished by completely unpacking the shipment and verifying the weight of the packing materials. CAUTION: Once this is done, this weight must be used in lieu of the standard packing allowance. Experience has shown it is often less than the standard allowance.

**Question:** My net weight was reduced by 10 percent for packing allowance but JPPSO-SAT/ECAF added 11.11 percent back in the total I am charged. Why wasn't only 10 percent factored back to identify packing weight for the excess?

**Response:** You are responsible for the packing materials of the excess property; therefore, after deducting the weight allowance, packing must be added. The net weight of the shipment was reduced by the packing allowance of 10 percent. When packing is restored, 10 percent of this lower number will not be sufficient to restore the original reduction which was 10 percent of a higher number. The mathematical equation to determine the packing for the excess weight is  $10\% \text{ divided by } 90\% = .1111$ .

**Question:** I wasn't notified I was overweight after they picked up my household goods, why

should I have to pay?

**Response:** The fact you weren't advised of excess weight prior to shipment is not a basis for relieving you of liability for costs in excess of those allowed by the law. Nothing in the law or the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR) authorizes an exemption from indebtedness because a transportation officer may not have notified you of possible excess weight. The very nature of a shipment of household goods is such that the existence of excess weight cannot be determined until the official weight is established. Once a shipment is packed, inventoried, loaded and moved to official scales, excess cost for excess weight has been incurred.

**Question:** I was promoted en route to my next permanent duty station but my personal property weight allowance was based on my lower rank, why?

**Response:** Entitlements for personal property movement are based on your effective date of orders. The effective date of orders per the JFTR is described as: For members separating or retiring it is the last day of active duty. For those going PCS the effective date is the date a member is required to begin travel from the old permanent duty station in order to arrive at the new permanent duty station on the date authorized by the mode of transportation authorized or used. That sounds confusing so here is an example that helps clear it up:

Authorized and actual reporting date..... 10 Jun

Less 7 days travel time actually used.... 3 Jun

Add 1 day..... 4 Jun

Effective date of PCS order..... 4 Jun

The weight for transportation of household goods entitlement becomes fixed on the effective date of orders directing a permanent change of station. Travel orders may not be revoked or modified retroactively so as to increase or decrease the rights which have accrued.

**Question:** My shipment from my previous PCS was well under my maximum weight allowance. As a matter of fact, I've never exceeded my household goods weight allowance and the packers assured me I was well under my weight allowance. How can I be overweight on this move?

**Response:** Carriers are paid on the basis of GBL weights, as supported by certified weight tickets, and the member is responsible for all weight shipped in excess of their entitlement. Also, estimates made prior to loading of the property or verbal opinions on whether the member's property will exceed an allowance are not binding and cannot be used to challenge officially recorded weight.

**Question:** My shipment was put into permanent storage when I went overseas and the weight was 10,000 pounds. When the property was picked up from the storage location and delivered to my new duty station it weighed 10,550 pounds. JPPSO-SAT/ECAF didn't identify my first

weight as being excess but they identified the move of the same property out of storage as excess and I got a bill. How can they have a weight validated by weight tickets as one weight and the same property also validated by another weight and it weigh 550 pounds more? Why can't they use the lower weight in calculating excess costs?

**Response:** It isn't unusual for the same property to have different weights in those cases where the property is removed from permanent storage. Additional packaging and bracing for the move to the new duty station could increase the weight. Variables in different scales also could contribute to weight differences. The government pays for the storage based on the weight ticket obtained at the time the property is placed into storage. When the property is released from storage a new weight is obtained and the government must pay the carrier on the new weight ticket.

**Question:** I had a lot of missing and irreparably damaged items on my move. Can ECAF deduct the weight of the missing items from total weight to reduce my excess cost?

**Response:** It depends. For example, lets say that the constructive weight of the missing items was 75 pounds. If a reweigh was performed on that same property and the reweigh weight was 75 pounds lower than the origin weight, ECAF could not allow credit for the missing items. ECAF could only deduct the constructive weight of the irreparably damaged items. The rationale for this is the missing items were not included in the destination weight. Of course if no reweigh was performed, or a reweigh was performed and the reweigh weight was more than the origin weight then ECAF will reduce the weight of the missing and irreparably damaged items.

**Question:** When the packers finished the driver arrived and his van already had a large shipment in it. Was I charged the weight already on the van?

**Response:** It is not unusual for carriers to load more than one person's property on a van. Weights are obtained before and after each loading/off loading and any other property on the truck becomes a part of the tare weight. Thus, the net weight of your property was not affected.

**Question:** The driver forgot to identify my pro gear on my inventory even though I had it separated from the rest of my household goods with a sign on it! How can I get credit now, 8 months after delivery?

**Response:** The regulations require PBP&E to be separately packed, clearly marked as professional items, and identified as such on the appropriate shipping documents. The member certifies that items listed on the carrier's household goods descriptive inventory were a true and complete list of the goods tendered to the carrier. Air Force guidance allows identification of PBP&E at destination by the delivering agent or the local transportation office. However, the identification must be upon delivery or immediately thereafter. Contact your destination Traffic Management Flight for assistance.

**Question:** If I make multiple shipments from several different places on my current Permanent

Change of Station orders will I be charged excess even if I'm not over my weight allowance?

**Response:** The Government's maximum transportation obligation is the through or completed movement of a member's prescribed weight allowance from origin to destination. While the Government will ship a member's household goods to/from other than authorized places, you are responsible for reimbursing the Government for movement in excess of entitlements. The cost of shipment to and from authorized points is compared with actual movement of households. The difference, if the cost is more for the actual movement, will be borne by the member.

## **C: MOBILE HOME SHIPMENT QUESTIONS**

**Question:** How do I prepare to move my mobile home at government expense to limit excess costs?

**Response:** Have preparations completed when the carrier arrives. By performing some of the preparation yourself you can reduce the cost of your move, and possibly avoid excess cost. Consider packing the home yourself, taping windows and mirrors, skirting/unskirting the trailer, and removing obstructions (fences, tree limbs, etc.)

**Question:** I want to make my own arrangements for movement of my mobile home. How much should I expect to be reimbursed by the Government?

**Response:** Reimbursement is limited to a cost not to exceed what it would have cost the Government to transport your maximum weight allowance of household goods from your old duty station to your new duty station. Be certain you stop by the local traffic management flight for a briefing so they can provide you information to make a sound decision on your move and find out the maximum reimbursement you are authorized. You may receive payment in advance of your move or upon completion, as you desire.

**Question:** If my mobile home is damaged en route and left there at the enroute point, what happens? How am I notified?

**Response:** The absolute best way to ensure you have full control in the event your mobile home is damaged enroute is to follow your mobile home from origin to destination. If you follow the mobile home, you have first hand knowledge of the damages. You can authorize the carrier to make any repairs necessary for onward movement right on the spot. The second best thing is to ensure you have a good en route telephone number and you make yourself available.

## **D: BOAT SHIPMENT QUESTIONS**

**Question:** I am making a move at government expense within the states. I've heard you can now move a boat at government expense but it sounds confusing. Can you clear up the confusion?

**Response:** There are six options available to members who are shipping boats domestically.

These are:

1. Any boat less than 14 feet long without a trailer, and dinghies or sculls of any size, can be shipped as regular household goods under the normal domestic rates.
2. Boats 14 feet or longer, or under 14 feet with a trailer, may be moved as household goods under a domestic one-time-only (OTO) rate negotiated by the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC). Service will be provided either by a tow away service or a commercial boat mover.
3. Movement under the Personally Procured Move (PPM) program.
4. Direct Procurement Method shipment, normally used only for small boats.
5. Member may move the boat at personal expense and file a claim for reimbursement IAW JFTR U53-20D. Movement may be over water.
6. If the boat qualified as a mobile home IAW the JFTR, Appendix A, the member may transport the boat over water as a self-propelled mobile dwelling in lieu of a HHGs shipment. Reimbursement would be IAW the JFTR, para U5510-B3.

**Question:** How much is it going to cost me to ship my boat and trailer in my household goods shipment to my new duty station?

**Response:** When shipment of personal property involves a boat, the member's maximum entitlement is compared to the actual costs of the household goods and boat shipments. The maximum entitlement consists of the chargeable net weight of the household goods and the weight of the boat/trailer shipment in one lot at the household goods shipment rate (household goods shipment minus professional books, papers, and equipment, if applicable, and 10 percent packing allowance). The method used by all uniformed services to determine any excess cost which might arise in connection with the movement of a boat/trailer are outlined in paragraph U5310 of the Joint Travel Regulations (JFTR). Paragraph U5310 stipulates the Government's maximum transportation obligation will not exceed the cost of one through household goods movement in one lot from and to authorized places at the lowest overall cost to the Government.

**Question:** I would like to take my boat with me to my overseas duty station, what are my options to ship the boat?

**Response:** There are three options for international movement of boats.

1. Any boat and/or trailer which fits into a standard overseas container and which is accepted by the carrier, may be shipped as household goods under the single factor rate in effect at the time of the shipment.
2. Other boats may be moved as household goods under an international "One Time Only (OTO)" boat rate negotiated by the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC). In these cases the carrier will offer an OTO rate for the household goods and will offer a separate quote for the movement of the boat.
3. Members may move the boat at personal expense and file a claim for reimbursement. Movement may be over water. In any case, contact the local Traffic Management Flight personal property counselor for advice and assistance.

**Question:** I have a boat and have decided not to ship it overseas with me. What are my options in this case?

**Response:** There are two alternatives:

1. The boat may be placed into nontemporary storage at government expense. The contractor will be entitled to a weight additive not to exceed the commercial tariff. An example would be 500 pounds weight additive for a 12-foot canoe. This weight additive will be included for all rate items that are authorized. Remember, in accordance with the JFTR, Vol 1, para U5310-E, any weight additive will be considered as part of the net weight of the shipment and counts against the member's weight allowance.

**NOTE:** Any special packing, crating, or handling **MUST** be paid by the member.

2. The member may elect to arrange for storage at personal expense and file for reimbursement after withdrawal from storage. Payment will be limited to the actual cost of the storage, not to exceed the cost the government would have paid to store the same weight of household goods. Incentive payments are not authorized. Certified weight tickets will be required.

**NOTE:** Water storage of boats is not authorized at government expense.